Sir, I lay copy of the Contempt of Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2006 on the Table.

REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS

SHRI KARNENDU BHATACHARJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I lay on the Table a copy (in English and Hindi) of the Eighteenth Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways on Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Eighth Report of the Committe on Demands for Grants (2005-2006) of the Ministry of Railways.

LEAVE ON ABSENCE

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have to inform Members that a letter has been received from Shri Ekanath K. Thakur stating that he is unable to attend the session of the Rajya Sabha for four weeks due to his indifferent health. He has, therefore, requested for the grant of Leave of Absence from 20th February to 17th March, 2006 of the current session of the Rajya Sabha.

Does he have the permission of the House for remaining absent from 20th February to 17th March, 2006 of the current session of the Rajya Sabha?

(No. Hon. Member dissented)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Permission to remain absent is granted.

MOTION FOR ELECTION TO THE COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

गृह मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री माणिक राव गावित) : उपसभापति महोदय, मैं प्रस्ताव करता हूं कि:-

"राजभाषा अधिनियम, 1963 (1963 का 19) की धारा (4) की उपधारा (2) के अनुसरण में यह सभा एकल हस्तान्तरणीय मत द्वारा आनुपातिक प्रतिनिधित्व पद्धति से सभा

के सदस्यों में से एक सदस्य को, डा॰ छत्रमाल सिंह लोधा की 23 दिसम्बर, 2005 (मध्याह्न पश्चात्) से राज्य सभा की सदस्यता समाप्त के कारण रिक्त हुए स्थान पर, राजभाषा समिति का सदस्य होने के लिए निर्वाचित करने की कार्यवाही करे।''

The qeustion was put and the motion was adopted.

MATTER RAISED WITH PERMISSION

Need to Declare Telugu as an Ancient and Classical Language

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chairman has permitted only one person to speak.

SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, the Telugu language has got history of more than 1000 years, but the Government of India is denying the status of ancient and classical language to Telugu.

Nearly 15 crore people in our country speak Telugu which is the second widely spoken language after Hindi. The first Telugu word can be observed in Ikshavakulu Inscription and Nagenjuna inscription of 250 A.D. contain Telugu words, which speaks of its ancient history.

I submit that on 25.11.2005, the Central Government, by its Gazette Notification No. 4-14014/7/2004-N1-11, amended the notification dated 12.10.2004. Instead of declaring thousand years history, they declared that fifteen hundred years to two thousand years is necessary. Strangely, by this reasoning, even before Sanskrit, which is the mother of all Indian languages, was declared as an ancient language, it is pertinent to point out that in Iathreya Brahmna (800 BC to 600 BC), in Ramayana, in Mahabharata and other mythological texts, there is a mention of Andhra People.

Sir, finally, I request the Government of India to declared Telugu as Indian and classical language immediately by relaxing the standards from the present 2000 years to 1000 years keeping in mind the sentiments of the Telugu people. Thank you.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, it is a long pending demand.

SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS (West Bengal): Sir, it is a long pending demand ...(*Interruptions*)...